

No early release of crime lab report

The Justice Department does not have to turn over its findings on the FBI crime lab until the final report is ready, a federal judge ruled in Washington.

The National Association of Defense Lawyers filed suit to get a copy of the report, saying it could show that innocent people are behind bars. Hundreds of cases may be affected, the group says. But Judge Gladys Kessler said the lawyers failed to show irreparable damage if the report isn't released before its April 15 due date. "The public's confidence in the criminal justice system and the FBI are at stake," she said.

The court decision came as attacks continued against the FBI concerning the suspension of agent Frederic Whitehurst by Director Louis Freeh. Whitehurst's claims of sloppy work and analyses slanted to favor prosecutors sparked the lab investigation. Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, said, "The FBI has shown, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that it cannot police itself."

— Gary Fields



Freeh: Earlier testimony questioned

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